



# Catholic Faith, Life & Creed

*A Complete Catechesis for Christian Living*

Doctrinal Catechesis Session  
Mary Birmingham

## STEWARDSHIP



James Tissot, *The Rich Young Man Went Away Sorrowful*. 1886-1894. (No known copyright restrictions)



## Begin with the Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### Opening prayer

Leader:

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
my memory,  
my understanding  
and my entire will,  
all I have and call my own.  
You have given all to me.  
To you, Lord, I return it.  
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace;  
that is enough for me.

—St. Ignatius Loyola



### Note to the Catechist

There may be more material than you can use in a one-hour session.  
Select and arrange accordingly. Use questions and material that is best  
suited for your particular group.



## Read the connecting statement

to draw the line between this week's  
liturgy and this chosen doctrinal theme.

This connecting statement is found in the *Breaking  
Open the Word* worksheet for this week.

### Catholic Faith, Life & Creed Version 2.0

© Mary Birmingham, 2011.  
All rights reserved.  
Version 2.0 reflects all recent revisions in  
the Roman Missal.

NIHIL OBSTAT  
Rev. Steven Olds  
Censor Liborum

IMPRIMATUR  
† Most Rev. John Noonan  
Bishop of Orlando

June 27, 2011

Editors: Bill Huebsch, Diana  
Macalintal, & Nick Wagner

Published cooperatively by  
TeamRCIA.com and  
PastoralPlanning.com.

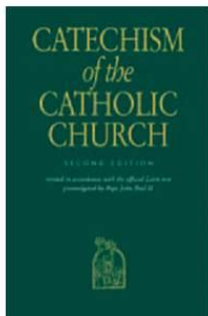


## Sharing Human Experience

Optional guest speaker: Perhaps invite someone from parish to come and share what living a life of stewardship has meant to their lives.

Catechist leads participants in a five-minute small group sharing exercise. Break into small groups (three or four). Remind participants to make time for all in the group to respond.

- ▶ God has given so much to all of us.
- ▶ Have you ever given a thought as to what God is asking you to give back to him?
- ▶ Name some things that you are presently doing that represent your gift and response to God's love.



## Sharing Catholic Doctrine

Drawn from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Refer also to the U.S. Bishop's document, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response—A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship*

Catechist continues:

- ▶ If we want to be a good disciple of Jesus, then we must be good stewards of the gifts God has given us.
- ▶ In order to be a good disciple, one must commit to build the kingdom of God on earth.
- ▶ In order to build the kingdom, we must invest with our very lives. When we understand the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we begin to realize that our lives belong to God and are to become an instrument for spreading the gospel and furthering God's kingdom.
- ▶ Good stewardship starts with a personal encounter with Jesus. We develop a personal, intimate relationship with Christ who loves us unconditionally.

- ▶ We commit to follow him and to be his disciple.
- ▶ Such a relationship of love demands a response on our part.
- ▶ It demands that our new vocation become one of radical discipleship.
- ▶ Authentic stewardship demands that one has undergone a serious conversion of heart, mind, and soul. Good stewards live a life of joy and peace, knowing that they have entrusted their lives into the Lord's care.
- ▶ When people hear the word *stewardship*, they think a money talk is not far behind. That does such a disservice to the overall concept of stewardship as set forth by our bishops.
- ▶ Good stewardship involves:
  - Evangelization and witness to the gospel
  - Growing in faith and the teaching of the Church
  - Stewardship of one's home and family members
  - Stewardship of embracing a simple lifestyle
  - Stewardship for care of the earth and ecological concerns
  - Stewardship of sharing the good news in the marketplace and in institutions
  - Stewardship and accountability of personal finances and parish affairs
  - Stewardship of time and talent to promote the reign of God in parish and wider world
  - Stewardship of social justice and the work for peace.

## The Challenge

- ▶ The bishops tell us that today it may be harder to be good stewards than ever before.

Catechist invites participants to respond to the following question in the wider group.

- ▶ Why do you think it is harder today than ever to be a good steward?

Catechist continues:

- ▶ Our secular culture distracts us from living the gospel of Christ.
- ▶ We are distracted by consumerism, materialism, individualism, and relativism.
- ▶ We privatize our faith. We often say it only matters what is in one's heart, not what is happening in the world. Some believe spirituality and secular life don't mix.
- ▶ Even though good Catholics often speak about community, the bishops tell us that we are as affected by individualism as the rest of the culture.
- ▶ Evangelization is not given high priority.
- ▶ Very often, little is done to nurture the gifts people bring to a given community.
- ▶ The bishops tell us how to use people's gifts, how to empower the laity, how to recognize the role of women, how to affirm racial, cultural and ethnic minorities; these and countless other issues remain vexing questions as well as opportunities (Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, 6).
- ▶ Being a good steward in every sense of the word is a serious duty.
- ▶ It is our response to the great gifts God has given; to ignore them is to do so at our peril, peril to our life of discipleship and faith.

## Disciple's Vocation

- ▶ To live out our Christian vocation means that we are called to be a disciple of Jesus. We are called to a life of stewardship.
- ▶ We are called to discern God's will for our lives. We are called to discern the ways in which God calls us to use the gifts he has given us.
- ▶ When Jesus called his first disciples, he called each one of them by name. He calls each of us by name. Even though God knows our weaknesses and our strengths, we are called for service in the kingdom of God.
- ▶ We also live out our vocation in the midst of a community. The community helps us discern God's will for our lives.
- ▶ We are called to grow in faith and to continue to learn more about our faith. We are called to be a good steward of the gift of faith God has given so we can share that faith with others in the world. We cannot share what we do not have.
- ▶ To be a good steward means that we are committed to learn more about God and about our Church, to acknowledge that it is a life-long process that never ends.
- ▶ Each of us is called to respond to God's call to live the Christian vocation. It is an urgent call. He wants us to drop everything and completely turn our lives over to him now. Tomorrow may be too late.

Catechist invites participants to respond to the following question in dyads.

- ▶ In what way are you presently living out your Christian vocation?
- ▶ What does that mean to you?
- ▶ What are the obstacles in your life that keep you from living out your Christian vocation?

Catechist continues:

- ▶ We live in freedom and can say no to the invitation to turn our lives over to God's care. The evangelists in the Bible tell us a story of the man who asked Jesus what he needed to do to be saved. When Jesus told him to sell all his possessions and come follow him, the man went away very sad for he had many possessions. (See the art work above.)
- ▶ Stewardship invites us to detach ourselves from our belongings.
- ▶ If we are not careful, possessions can become a distraction from living the Christian vocation.
- ▶ Church institutions and individuals must be committed to detachment.
- ▶ Stewardship call us to live as Jesus lived, to do God's will, to proclaim the good news to the world, to heal the sick, to care for God's people, to live life and live it to the full.



## The Cost of Discipleship

- ▶ Jesus said we must take up our cross and follow him.
- ▶ The way of discipleship is not an easy one.
- ▶ Jesus told us to deny ourselves.
- ▶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer insisted that to follow Christ is not an easy road. It does not offer cheap grace. When people become Christian just to sustain a warm, fuzzy, feel-good experience they will be disappointed. Christianity offers “costly grace” insists Bonhoeffer.<sup>1</sup>
  - “(C)heap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline. Communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.... Of course you have sinned, but now everything is forgiven, so you can stay as you are and enjoy the consolations of forgiveness. The main defect of such a proclamation is that it contains no demand for discipleship. In contrast to this is costly grace: costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. It is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: ‘My yoke is easy and my burden is light.’”<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ To be a disciple we must be willing to relinquish our power, our status, wealth and control.
- ▶ Discipleship requires the willingness to embrace *costly grace*.

## Jesus, the Good Steward

- ▶ We are to follow the example of Jesus.
- ▶ The stories Jesus told were an invitation to be good stewards of all the gifts we have been given. Each of us will be judged as to how we used those gifts.
- ▶ St. Ignatius Loyola gave us a wonderful yardstick for understanding the way in which we are to view the resources of this world.
- ▶ He writes: “Human beings were created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save their souls. The other things on the face of the earth are created for them to help them in attaining the end for which they are created. Hence they are to make use of these things in as far as they help them in the attainment of their end, and they must rid themselves of them in as far as they provide a hindrance to them.... Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.”<sup>3</sup> St Ignatius believed that the right use of things requires that they be used to serve others.

---

1 Cf. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Macmillan, 1966. BT 380.B66 1966, 44

2 Ibid. 44

3 *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated by Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean, Penguin Books, London 2004, 289.

- ▶ When disciples live lives of stewardship, they are rewarded with peace that passes all understanding. They have found deep meaning and purpose for their lives. They live on this earth to help build God's kingdom as they await the kingdom yet to come.

## Stewardship of Creation

- ▶ God has gifted us with life.
- ▶ God entered into a covenant with human beings at the creation of the world.
- ▶ God promised to care for human beings, and the human response was to love God with heart, mind, and soul. We love one another and care for those who cannot care for themselves—the poor, the lowly, widows and orphans. And we care for the earth.
- ▶ To be a good steward means that we must have an ecological consciousness.
- ▶ It is not an option for Catholics to ignore the concerns over global warming, pollution of the earth and oceans.
- ▶ To be a good stewardship of creation means that we adopt simpler lifestyles so that we do not over-consume the earth's resources.
- ▶ To be a good steward of creation means that we cultivate human creativity such as art, scholarship, science, technology, business and trade, physical labor, skilled work, and serving others.
- ▶ Good stewardship requires that we discern the areas of our lives in which we participate in the systems and structures that promote war, that oppress peoples, and that do not enhance human dignity.

Catechist relates a story in which human dignity was not enhanced, either from a local or global perspective. See appendix #1 for an example.

## Stewardship and Evangelization

- ▶ A person cannot be a good steward without a commitment to share the good news.
- ▶ Parents have a responsibility to share God's love with their children. They must be a model of good stewardship, such as:
  - living according to the principles of stewardship in the home
  - caring for the earth
  - caring for God's poor and oppressed people
  - not missing an opportunity to evangelize friends and family members
  - being a responsible steward of financial blessings
  - sharing resources of time, talent, and treasure in the parish, civic, and worldwide community.
- ▶ Parishes are similarly called to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to them such as:
  - giving to the world's poor
  - nurturing and safeguarding the time, talent and treasure that has been entrusted to them
  - being fiscally responsible and accountable

- promoting a commitment to evangelization and civic and worldwide concerns

Catechist invites participants to discuss the ways in which their parish is a good steward of the resources of time, talent, and treasure in their local and global community. See appendix #2 for an example.

## Solidarity and Stewardship

- ▶ Good stewardship demands that we as Catholics work to minimize the disparity between rich and poor people.
- ▶ Good stewardship demands that we live the principles of Catholic social teaching. We must uphold the dignity of all. We must advocate for toward a just wage and adequate housing for all. We do these things not because it is charity, but because God wants us to. It is our response to God's gift of life and creation.
- ▶ Good stewardship demands that we stand with all the peoples of the world as brothers and sisters, that we recognize that we are part of a global human family, and that our concerns reach, beyond our national borders.
- ▶ Good stewardship demands that we work toward unity among Christians. While we recognize our diversities and acknowledge our differences, we always offer mutual respect for one another as children of God.
- ▶ Good stewardship requires participation in the Eucharistic feast of the Lord where we come week after week to be fed, nourished, and uplifted as the Body of Christ. We then go out and allow the world to feed off of us, so we can build the kingdom of God on earth.

## The Christian Steward

- ▶ A Christian steward is imaginative, conscientious, and faithful.
- ▶ A Christian steward is motivated by generosity and love as well as duty.
- ▶ A Christian steward promotes the reign of God on earth with a vision toward life eternal with God.
- ▶ A Christian steward offers their time, talent, and treasure for the building of the God's kingdom, in parish, civic, and worldwide community.
- ▶ A Christian steward embraces the biblical principle of tithing for the building of God's kingdom (a possible rule of thumb: five percent for the parish, five percent for the world's concerns).
- ▶ A Christian steward cares for God's creation and is an advocate for care and maintenance of the earth.
- ▶ A Christian steward understands that the Church exists to generate itself. Good stewardship requires the baptismal call to go out and evangelize, to exercise the baptismal responsibility to be priest, prophet, and king: priest to serve God's people, prophet to proclaim the good news, king to lead people to Christ.
- ▶ A Christian steward embraces a preferential option for the world's poor and oppressed.
- ▶ A Christian steward understands the dignity of all people and is a willing voice and advocate to promote that dignity.



- ▶ A Christian steward is fiscally responsible, a good manager of the financial gifts God has provided.

## Summary

- ▶ Stewardship is more than sharing time, talent, and treasure with the parish
- ▶ Stewardship encompasses the entire Christian vocation
- ▶ Stewardship includes evangelization and witness to the gospel
- ▶ Stewardship involves growing in faith and in the teaching of the Church
- ▶ Stewardship includes the proper spiritual, emotional, and financial care of one's home and family members
- ▶ Stewardship invites disciples to embrace a simple lifestyle
- ▶ Stewardship challenges us to take care of the earth and ecological concerns
- ▶ Stewardship requires that we share the good news in the marketplace and in institution
- ▶ Stewardship includes accountability of personal finances and parish affairs
- ▶ Stewardship does require the responsible care and management of time and talent and treasure to promote the reign of God in parish and wider world, but there is more to it than merely that
- ▶ Stewardship requires a commitment to social justice and the work of peace



## Community Connections

Catechist invites participants to break into small groups and discuss the following question.

- ▶ Is there anything we discussed today that has never been on your radar screen at all, things you never before considered to be part of what it means to be a good steward of God's gifts?
- ▶ What has God done for you? What reason do you have in your life to be grateful to God?
- ▶ When you consider what constitutes a good steward, what can you point to in your own life that would allow you to pat yourself on the back and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant?"
- ▶ What one thing can you do that you are not presently doing?
- ▶ How do you feel about giving ten percent of all that you are and all that you have back to God?
- ▶ If you are not presently doing that, what small steps can you take to accomplish that goal?

Catechist invites participants to discuss the following questions in the wider group.

- ▶ What was the most enlightening part of the Church's teaching on stewardship?
- ▶ What was the most challenging?
- ▶ Where does our culture fall short when it comes to stewardship?
- ▶ Where does it rise to the occasion? Where does our culture understand itself to be good stewards of the things of this world?
- ▶ Can you relate what we have shared today in the liturgy, in our breaking open session and in our session on church teaching to some experience in your life? Is there an event in your life that speaks to the need to be a better steward of the gifts God has given you?



## Mystagogy & your decision for change

Catechist asks participants to look at the list of what constitutes a Christian steward. Name one thing on that list you would like to try to do this week to live more fully according to those principles. (Perhaps a change of attitude, an action, or behavior.)



## Closing Prayer

- ▶ Let us take several minutes to ask the Holy Spirit to convict us of our need to be good stewards, to open our minds and hearts to what God is calling us to become, to live the principles of good stewardship, to help us become aware of his presence in all our undertakings and in all our decisions, to put joy in our hearts so that we can hear the prayer that he is constantly praying in and through us.

Come Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of the faithful  
and enkindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth you Spirit and we shall be created  
And you shall renew the face of the earth.  
Amen.

Take two to three minutes for silent prayer or to write in a journal.

## Stewardship Prayers

Provide a copy for participants and all pray together:

### A PRAYER FOR VISION

Author Unknown

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves;  
when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little;  
when we arrived safely because we have sailed too close to shore.  
Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of the things we possess,  
we have lost our thirst for the water of life.  
Stir us, Lord, to dare more boldly,  
to venture on wider seas,  
where storms will show your mastery;  
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.  
We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes  
and to push us into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love. Amen.

From **Mother Teresa** *In My Own Words*

### Generosity

“Without a spirit of sacrifice, without a life of prayer,  
without an intimate attitude of penance,  
we would not be capable of carrying out our work.”  
“I ask you one thing:  
do not tire of giving,  
but do not give your leftovers.  
Give until it hurts, until you feel the pain.”  
“Open your hearts to the love God instills in them.  
God loves you tenderly.  
What he gives you is not to be kept under lock and key, but to be shared...  
The more you save, the less you will be able to give.  
The less you have, the more you will know how to share...  
Let us ask God, when it comes time to ask him for something,  
to help us to be generous.”  
“If we worry too much about ourselves, we won’t have time for others.”

## Appendix

#1. A few years ago, the major United States corporation went into poor nations and told mothers that powdered milk was better for their babies than breast milk. This led to a serious health and nutrition problem for the newborns of those Third World countries. With rare and polluted water sources, babies were getting sick, and mother's milk was already dried up before anything could be done to fix the problem. A public outcry and boycott of this company's products prompted the company to stop such oppressive tactics.

#2. Our parish supports many outreach activities. The parish gives over a half-million dollars a year to the world's poor. It supports a parish-owned and -operated thrift store that serves the needs of the poor in our area. It supports community-based *Daily Bread* that feeds the homeless men, women, and families every day. We have built 15 homes for Habitat for Humanity. We have a very active social concerns office. We have built a clinic in Peru and a school in Haiti. The parish has an active tithing program. Ten percent of all collected funds go directly to the world's poor. We support and house a community-based, community action group that works for systemic change at the legislative level to assist in advocacy work for the disenfranchised. Thirty percent of the children in our school are tuition subsidized. Our parish is a good steward of all the resources entrusted to it.

## Handout on Stewardship

- ▶ If we want to be a good disciple of Jesus, then we must be good stewards of the gifts God has given us.
- ▶ In order to be a good disciple, one must commit to build the kingdom of God on earth.
- ▶ In order to build the kingdom, we must invest with our very lives. When we understand the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we begin to realize that our lives belong to God and are to become an instrument for spreading the gospel and furthering God's kingdom.
- ▶ Good stewardship starts with a personal encounter with Jesus. We develop a personal, intimate relationship with Christ who loves us unconditionally.
  
- ▶ We commit to follow him and to be his disciple.
- ▶ Such a relationship of love demands a response on our part.
- ▶ It demands that our new vocation become one of radical discipleship.
- ▶ Authentic stewardship demands that one has undergone a serious conversion of heart, mind, and soul. Good stewards live a life of joy and peace, knowing that they have entrusted their lives into the Lord's care.
- ▶ When people hear the word *stewardship*, they think a money talk is not far behind. That does such a disservice to the overall concept of stewardship as set forth by our bishops.
- ▶ Good stewardship involves:
  - Evangelization and witness to the gospel
  - Growing in faith and the teaching of the Church
  - Stewardship of one's home and family members
  - Stewardship of embracing a simple lifestyle
  - Stewardship for care of the earth and ecological concerns
  - Stewardship of sharing the good news in the marketplace and in institutions
  - Stewardship and accountability of personal finances and parish affairs
  - Stewardship of time and talent to promote the reign of God in parish and wider world
  - Stewardship of social justice and the work for peace.

### The Challenge

- ▶ The bishops tell us that today it may be harder to be good stewards than ever before.
- ▶ Our secular culture distracts us from living the gospel of Christ.
- ▶ We are distracted by consumerism, materialism, individualism, and relativism.
- ▶ We privatize our faith. We often say it only matters what is in one's heart, not what is happening in the world. Some believe spirituality and secular life don't mix.
- ▶ Even though good Catholics often speak about community, the bishops tell us that we are as affected by individualism as the rest of the culture.



- ▶ Evangelization is not given high priority.
- ▶ Very often, little is done to nurture the gifts people bring to a given community.
- ▶ The bishops tell us how to use people's gifts, how to empower the laity, how to recognize the role of women, how to affirm racial, cultural and ethnic minorities; these and countless other issues remain vexing questions as well as opportunities (Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, 6).
- ▶ Being a good steward in every sense of the word is a serious duty.
- ▶ It is our response to the great gifts God has given; to ignore them is to do so at our peril, peril to our life of discipleship and faith.

## Disciple's Vocation

- ▶ To live out our Christian vocation means that we are called to be a disciple of Jesus. We are called to a life of stewardship.
- ▶ We are called to discern God's will for our lives. We are called to discern the ways in which God calls us to use the gifts he has given us.
- ▶ When Jesus called his first disciples, he called each one of them by name. He calls each of us by name. Even though God knows our weaknesses and our strengths, we are called for service in the kingdom of God.
- ▶ We also live out our vocation in the midst of a community. The community helps us discern God's will for our lives.
- ▶ We are called to grow in faith and to continue to learn more about our faith. We are called to be a good steward of the gift of faith God has given so we can share that faith with others in the world. We cannot share what we do not have.
- ▶ To be a good steward means that we are committed to learn more about God and about our Church, to acknowledge that it is a life-long process that never ends.
- ▶ Each of us is called to respond to God's call to live the Christian vocation. It is an urgent call. He wants us to drop everything and completely turn our lives over to him now. Tomorrow may be too late.
- ▶ We live in freedom and can say no to the invitation to turn our lives over to God's care. The evangelists in the Bible tell us a story of the man who asked Jesus what he needed to do to be saved. When Jesus told him to sell all his possessions and come follow him, the man went away very sad for he had many possessions. (See the art work above.)
- ▶ Stewardship invites us to detach ourselves from our belongings.
- ▶ If we are not careful, possessions can become a distraction from living the Christian vocation.
- ▶ Church institutions and individuals must be committed to detachment.
- ▶ Stewardship call us to live as Jesus lived, to do God's will, to proclaim the good news to the world, to heal the sick, to care for God's people, to live life and live it to the full.

## The Cost of Discipleship

- ▶ Jesus said we must take up our cross and follow him.
- ▶ The way of discipleship is not an easy one.
- ▶ Jesus told us to deny ourselves.
- ▶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer insisted that to follow Christ is not an easy road. It does not offer cheap grace. When people become Christian just to sustain a warm, fuzzy, feel-good experience they will be disappointed. Christianity offers “costly grace” insists Bonhoeffer.<sup>4</sup>
  - “(C)heap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline. Communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ.... Of course you have sinned, but now everything is forgiven, so you can stay as you are and enjoy the consolations of forgiveness. The main defect of such a proclamation is that it contains no demand for discipleship. In contrast to this is costly grace: costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. It is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: ‘My yoke is easy and my burden is light.’”<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ To be a disciple we must be willing to relinquish our power, our status, wealth and control.
- ▶ Discipleship requires the willingness to embrace *costly grace*.

## Jesus, the Good Steward

- ▶ We are to follow the example of Jesus.
- ▶ The stories Jesus told were an invitation to be good stewards of all the gifts we have been given. Each of us will be judged as to how we used those gifts.
- ▶ St. Ignatius Loyola gave us a wonderful yardstick for understanding the way in which we are to view the resources of this world.
- ▶ He writes: “Human beings were created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save their souls. The other things on the face of the earth are created for them to help them in attaining the end for which they are created. Hence they are to make use of these things in as far as they help them in the attainment of their end, and they must rid themselves of them in as far as they provide a hindrance to them.... Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.”<sup>6</sup> St Ignatius believed that the right use of things requires that they be used to serve others.

---

4 Cf. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Macmillan, 1966. BT 380.B66 1966, 44

5 Ibid. 44

6 *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated by Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean, Penguin Books, London 2004, 289.

- ▶ When disciples live lives of stewardship, they are rewarded with peace that passes all understanding. They have found deep meaning and purpose for their lives. They live on this earth to help build God's kingdom as they await the kingdom yet to come.

## Stewardship of Creation

- ▶ God has gifted us with life.
- ▶ God entered into a covenant with human beings at the creation of the world.
- ▶ God promised to care for human beings, and the human response was to love God with heart, mind, and soul. We love one another and care for those who cannot care for themselves—the poor, the lowly, widows and orphans. And we care for the earth.
- ▶ To be a good steward means that we must have an ecological consciousness.
- ▶ It is not an option for Catholics to ignore the concerns over global warming, pollution of the earth and oceans.
- ▶ To be a good stewardship of creation means that we adopt simpler lifestyles so that we do not over-consume the earth's resources.
- ▶ To be a good steward of creation means that we cultivate human creativity such as art, scholarship, science, technology, business and trade, physical labor, skilled work, and serving others.
- ▶ Good stewardship requires that we discern the areas of our lives in which we participate in the systems and structures that promote war, that oppress peoples, and that do not enhance human dignity.

## Stewardship and Evangelization

- ▶ A person cannot be a good steward without a commitment to share the good news.
- ▶ Parents have a responsibility to share God's love with their children. They must be a model of good stewardship, such as:
  - living according to the principles of stewardship in the home
  - caring for the earth
  - caring for God's poor and oppressed people
  - not missing an opportunity to evangelize friends and family members
  - being a responsible steward of financial blessings
  - sharing resources of time, talent, and treasure in the parish, civic, and worldwide community.
- ▶ Parishes are similarly called to be good stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to them such as:
  - giving to the world's poor
  - nurturing and safeguarding the time, talent and treasure that has been entrusted to them
  - being fiscally responsible and accountable
  - promoting a commitment to evangelization and civic and worldwide concerns

## Solidarity and Stewardship

- ▶ Good stewardship demands that we as Catholics work to minimize the disparity between rich and poor people.
- ▶ Good stewardship demands that we live the principles of Catholic social teaching. We must uphold the dignity of all. We must advocate for toward a just wage and adequate housing for all. We do these things not because it is charity, but because God wants us to. It is our response to God's gift of life and creation.
- ▶ Good stewardship demands that we stand with all the peoples of the world as brothers and sisters, that we recognize that we are part of a global human family, and that our concerns reach, beyond our national borders.
- ▶ Good stewardship demands that we work toward unity among Christians. While we recognize our diversities and acknowledge our differences, we always offer mutual respect for one another as children of God.
- ▶ Good stewardship requires participation in the Eucharistic feast of the Lord where we come week after week to be fed, nourished, and uplifted as the Body of Christ. We then go out and allow the world to feed off of us, so we can build the kingdom of God on earth.

## The Christian Steward

- ▶ A Christian steward is imaginative, conscientious, and faithful.
- ▶ A Christian steward is motivated by generosity and love as well as duty.
- ▶ A Christian steward promotes the reign of God on earth with a vision toward life eternal with God.
- ▶ A Christian steward offers their time, talent, and treasure for the building of the God's kingdom, in parish, civic, and worldwide community.
- ▶ A Christian steward embraces the biblical principle of tithing for the building of God's kingdom (a possible rule of thumb: five percent for the parish, five percent for the world's concerns).
- ▶ A Christian steward cares for God's creation and is an advocate for care and maintenance of the earth.
- ▶ A Christian steward understands that the Church exists to generate itself. Good stewardship requires the baptismal call to go out and evangelize, to exercise the baptismal responsibility to be priest, prophet, and king: priest to serve God's people, prophet to proclaim the good news, king to lead people to Christ.
- ▶ A Christian steward embraces a preferential option for the world's poor and oppressed.
- ▶ A Christian steward understands the dignity of all people and is a willing voice and advocate to promote that dignity.
- ▶ A Christian steward is fiscally responsible, a good manager of the financial gifts God has provided.